

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 01707 291349Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00
USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7329
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
COMSIXTHFLT
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 1707

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS PINT MILI ASEC LE
SUBJ: LEBANESE SITUATION, MARCH 29, 1200 HOURS LOCAL

REF: BEIRUT 1673 (DTG 281313Z MAR 78)

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. ARAFAT REPORTEDLY ACCEPTED CEASE-FIRE. SWEDISH
TROOPS TOOK UP POSITIONS ON THE KHANDALI BRIDGE BUT THE FRENCH
HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO TAKE CONTROL OF THE QASIMIYAH BRIDGE. SA'D
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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 01707 291349Z

HADDAD OPENED A RECRUITING OFFICE IN MARJAYUN. A SYRIAN BULLDOZER
HIT TAPLINE. REFUGEES ARE RETURNING TO TYRE. THE GOL ORDERED
ALL ARMY PERSONNEL TO REPORT TO DUTY. THE ARAB LEAGUE EXTENDED
THE ADF MANDATE. SPEAKER KAMAL AL ASSAD POSTPONED INDEFINITELY
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON THE ARMED PALESTINIAN PRESENCE IN LEBANON.
END SUMMARY.

2. ARAFAT REPORTEDLY ACCEPTS CEASE-FIRE.

A. ACCORDING TO A U.N. STATEMENT, YASIR ARAFAT ACCEPTED SECRETARY-GENERAL KURT WALDHEIM'S MARCH 27 CALL FOR A CEASE-FIRE IN SOUTH LEBANON DURING A MEETING WITH UNIFIL COMMANDER ERSKINE IN BEIRUT ON MARCH 28 (SEPTTEL). ARAFAT TOLD REPORTERS AFTER THE MEETING WITH ERSKINE: "I SAY ON BEHALF OF THE PLO AND THE JOINT FORCES THAT WE WILL PROVIDE ALL THE FACILITIES WITHIN OUR CAPACITY TO HELP THE INTERNATIONAL EMERGENCY FORCES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR MISSION. WE DO THIS TO FACILITATE THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE ISRAELI FORCES FROM LEBANESE TERRITORY."

B. THE PLO REPRESENTATIVE AT THE U.N., ZEHD L. TERZI, WAS QUOTED BY AP, HOWEVER, AS SAYING THAT THE PALESTINIANS WOULD CONTINUE TO "RESPOND TO ISRAELI PROVOCATIONS" AND THAT THE ISRAELI ARMED PRESENCE IN THE AREA WAS "A MAJOR PROVOCATION." Wafa's account of the matter was equivocal (SEPTTEL). Wafa made no mention of a cease-fire and said only that Arafat affirmed that the PLO was "READY TO EXTEND ALL REQUIRED FACILITIES TO MAKE THE U.N. FORCE'S MISSION SUCCESSFUL AND TO GUARANTEE THE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM SOUTH LEBANON."

3. UNIFIL ACTIVITIES.

A. SWEDISH TROOPS TOOK UP POSITION ON THE Khardali Bridge on March 28. They also took up position in IBL as Saqy.
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PAGE 03 BEIRUT 01707 291349Z

B. AS OF THE MORNING OF MARCH 29, FRENCH SOLDIERS HAD STILL NOT BEEN ABLE TO TAKE CONTROL OF THE QASIMIYAH BRIDGE NORTH OF TYRE BECAUSE OF OPPOSITION BY PALESTINIANS IN THE AREA. ONE FRENCH PARATROOPER WAS SLIGHTLY WOUNDED BY A MORTAR SHELL FRAGMENT, ONE KILOMETER SOUTHEAST OF THE BRIDGE, AFP REPORTED.

C. IRANIAN SOLDIERS ARE AT THE QA'QA'IYAT (AKIYA) BRIDGE. WITH SWEDES AT THE Khardali Bridge, ONLY THE QASIMIYAH BRIDGE OVER THE LITANI IS NOT UNDER U.N. CONTROL.

4. HADDAD OPNS RECRUITING OFFICE.

AFTER ANNOUNCING ON MARCH 28 THE FORMATION OF A "LOCAL ARMY" IN THE SOUTH, CHRISTIAN MILITIA LEADER SA'D HADDAD ON MARCH 28 OPENED A RECRUITING OFFICE IN MARJAYUN. HADDAD REPORTEDLY HAS PERHAPS 500 MEN NOW UNDER HIS CONTROL AND CLAIMS HE WISHES TO BUILD A FORCE TOTALING 7000 MEN.

5. TAPLINE INCIDENT.

A SYRIAN ARMY BULLDOZER STRUCK TAPLINE IN SYRIA ON MARCH 28 BREAK-

ING THE PIPELINE AND CAUSING FIRE WHICH KILLED DRIVER. ZAHRANI AND TRIPOLI REFINERIES, WITH FOUR WEEKS CRUDE SUPPLY IN TANKS, ARE UNAFFECTED.

6. REFUGEES RETURNING TO TYRE.

REFUGEES ARE RETURNING TO TYRE. IKE REPORTED ON MARCH 29 THAT WHILE THERE HAD ONLY BEEN A "COUPLE OF HUNDRED RESIDENTS" IN THE CITY LAST WEEK, THERE WERE NOW "SEVERAL THOUSAND PEOPLE" IN THE CITY. IKE SAID "CARS AND TRUCKS PACKED WITH PEOPLE AND LADEN WITH PERSONAL BELONGINGS WERE JAMMING THE ROADS LEADING INTO TYRE."

7. ARMY MOBILIZATION ORDER.

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PAGE 04 BEIRUT 01707 291349Z

THE GOL ON MARCH 28 ORDERED ALL 18,000 OFFICERS, SOLDIERS AND CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES OF THE ARMY WHO HAVE NOT YET REPORTED TO THEIR BARRACKS TO REPORT TO DUTY BY APRIL 15 OR FACE DISCHARGE. ACCORDING TO DATT SOURCES, THE MOVE IS A PRELUDE TO GENERAL MOBILIZATION AS PART OF AN EFFORT TO SEND FORCES TO SOUTH LEBANON AND TO RESTORE SECURITY TO THE REST OF THE COUNTRY.

8. ADF MANDATE EXTENDED.

THE ARAB LEAGUE FOREIGN MINISTERS VOTED IN CAIRO ON MARCH 28 TO RENEW THE MANDATE OF THE ARAB DETERRENT FORCE (ADF) IN LEBANON FOR ANOTHER SIX MONTHS, BEGINNING APRIL 27. SYRIA, WHICH PROVIDES MOST OF THE SOLDIERS IN THE ADF, DID NOT ATTEND THE MEETING, HOWEVER.

9. PARLIAMENTARY MEETING POSTPONED.

SPEAKER KAMEL AL ASSAD INDICATED ON MARCH 28 THAT A PROMISED PARLIAMENTARY MEETING ON THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE HAD BEEN POSTPONED INDEFINITELY. HE SAID THAT IT WOULD BE "SCHEDULED BY ME AT AN APPROPRIATE TIME." THE LEBANESE FRONT DURING THE MARCH 20 SESSION, WHEN THE DEPUTIES HAD ENDORSED UNSC RESOLUTION 425, HAD DEMANDED THAT PARLIAMENT ALSO MEET TO DISCUSS THE ARMED PALESTINIAN PRESENCE (SEE BEIRUT 1519). SUNNI MP'S, HOWEVER, OBJECTED TO THE FRONT'S DEMAND.
PARKER

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